

# *Planting in the Proper Place*

The Parable of the Sower & Seeds

Mark 4:1-9

July 30, 2023

*A Pictorial Menagerie*

*Illustrating*

*Lessons to Learn*

*From the Cowbird*

Pastor Steve Coté



What is this mess of straw from last winter in the window flower box of my shed?



Oh, my! It's a bird nest, and a bird just flew away and startled me!



Look inside. There's a baby bird and two unhatched eggs!



That baby bird is hungry. We should be hungry like that for the Lord to feed us spiritually! That is how we grow! This was the point of my sermon on July 9, *Growing through Knowing*, when I showed these four photos.



Weeks later...



Oh, no! The big baby bird is gone, but the other eggs never hatched!



Close-up of a Cardinal egg and 2 Cowbird eggs

It turns out that the big bird was a Cowbird, and the two small eggs are Cardinal eggs. Cowbirds lay their eggs in the nests of other birds. This can sometimes prevent the host bird's eggs from hatching. Since the Cowbird eggs hatch more quickly, they can harm the other eggs or younger baby birds that do hatch. Cowbirds are called "brood parasites," and they can hurt the rest of the bird world through their invasion of nests not their own. They do not build their own nests and take advantage of hundreds of other bird species. Fortunately for some Cowbirds, the owners of the nests will often feed the Cowbird chicks along with their own.



This nest was built in our outdoor Christmas wreath, another Cardinal nest. Unfortunately, it looks like a Cowbird kicked a Cardinal egg out of the nest, and it never hatched.

Here is a nest found by the Nate & Rebecca Erb family at their home. You can see a Cowbird egg that was laid in a Finch's nest. All the eggs hatched except one of the five Finch eggs, which was knocked out of the nest, possibly by the early-born Cowbird chick. In this case, the Finch mother fed all of the baby birds, including the baby Cowbird.



Just as the Sower in the parable Jesus taught in Mark 4:1-9 only got good fruit when he planted seeds in good soil, we believers need to plant our lives in our own nests, those given to us by the Lord in His kingdom. We "plant in the proper place" by focusing on the good soil of God's Word, dynamic fellowship, selfless service, regular worship, right relationships, and continuous prayer.